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March 29, 1979

Dear Senator Warner:

Thank you for your letter of March 9 in which you requested information on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Joe Teague, concerning the disposition of the remains of of the Jonestown, Guyana deceased.

The United States Air Force removed 913 bodies from Guyana to Dover Air Force Base, in Dover, Delaware. Our government was requested by the Government of Guyana to remove the bodies. To date, 663 of the bodies have been identified and 250 bodies have not been identified. More than 200 of the unidentified are children. As of March 21, 359 bodies had been released to the next of kin, and 554 unclaimed and unidentified bodies remain on the base.

The Department believes that transportation and burial of the remains is a private family matter and the responsibility of the next of kin. It is, however, recognized that a number of the bodies may remain either unclaimed by the next of kin or unidentified.

On January 23, a California Superior Court in San Francisco granted the Emergency Relief Committee 30 days to submit a plan for the transportation and burial of the bodies that still remain at the Dover Air Force Base Mortuary. The court is presiding over the dissolution of the People's Temple Corporation. The Emergency Relief Committee asked the court to disburse People's Temple assets to finance the plan the Committee prepared. The court on February 26 held a hearing on the Committee's proposed plan, but as yet no decision has been rendered by the court. While it is hoped that the court will accept the Committee's plan, the final decision is, of course, up to the Superior Court.

The Honorable
John W. Warner
United States Senate.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
PREVIEWED BY DMarl DATE 2/27/81
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I hope this information will be helpful to you in replying to your constituent. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Jay A. Rini at 632-3713.

Sincerely,

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

Enclosures:

Correspondence Returned.

CA/OCS/CCS/ARA JARini:acm 3/22/79

Clearances:
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